673
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SUPERMAN
IN ACTION COMICS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
1992
4
"AND HELLGRAMMITE IS STILL HIS NAME!"
BY STERN, McLEOD & RODIER
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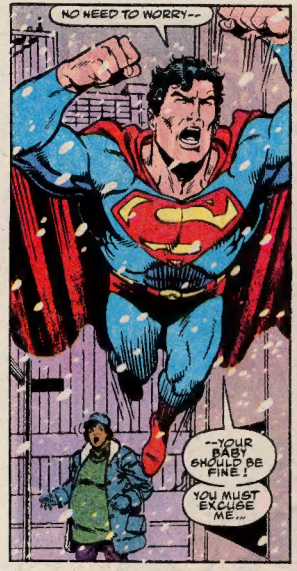
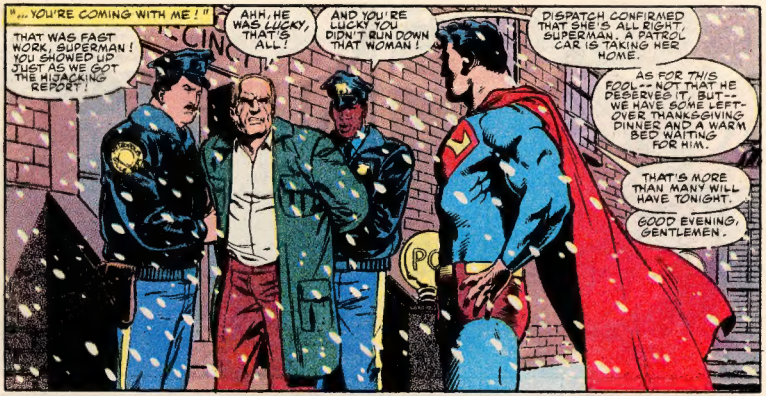

NO NEED TO WORRY--
--YOUR BABY SHOULD BE FINE!
YOU MUST EXCUSE ME...

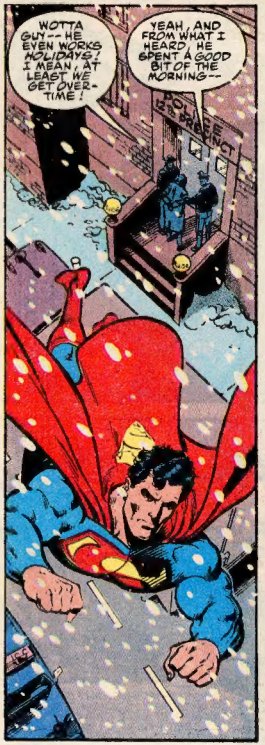
"...I HAVE A HIJACKER TO CATCH!"
@#%$!!

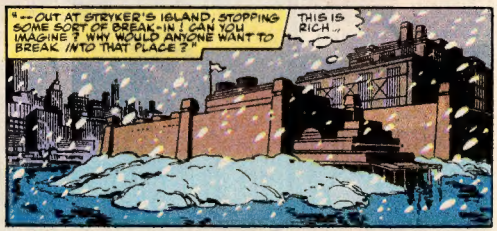
HE WAS GONE ALL DURIN' THE POWER BLACKOUT.* WHY COULDN'T HE'VE BEEN OUTTA TOWN TONIGHT?!
'SALL THAT FAT HIPPO'S FAULT! IF SHE HADN'T WADDLED OUT INTA THE STREET--!
*ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #484 AND ALL THE SUPER-TITLES THROUGH SUPERMAN #62!

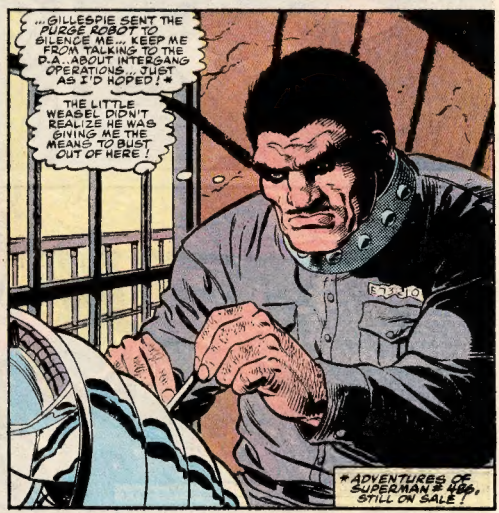
HOW DARE YOU BLAME AN INNOCENT WOMAN FOR YOUR OWN CULPABILITY!
IF YOU HADN'T RUN THE RED LIGHT AND THREATENED HER LIFE, EVEN I MIGHT NOT HAVE NOTICED YOU AND YOUR BOOTY!
BRAT-TAT-TAT
KRUNK

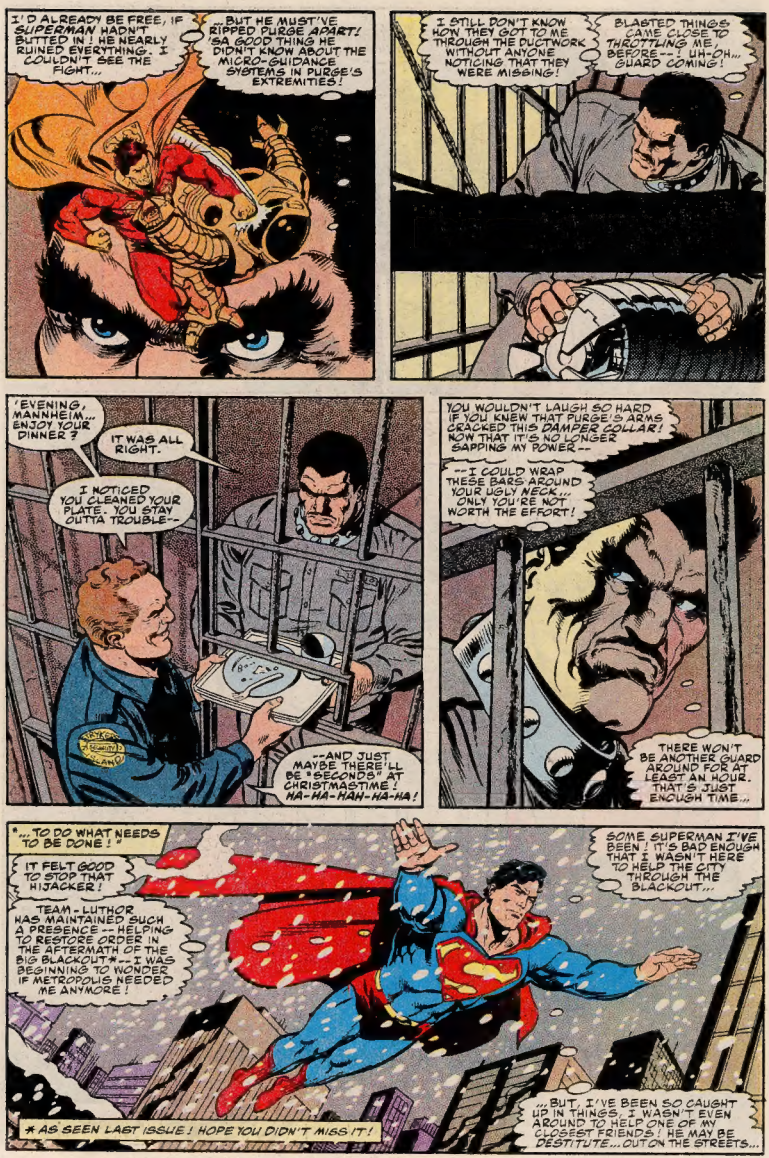
NO! NO!!
OH, YES! AND NOW...


"...YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!"
THAT WAS FAST WORK, SUPERMAN! YOU SHOWED UP JUST AS WE GOT THE HIJACKING REPORT!
AHH, HE WAS LUCKY, THAT'S ALL!
AND YOU'RE LUCKY YOU DIDN'T RUN DOWN THAT WOMAN!
DISPATCH CONFIRMED THAT SHE'S ALL RIGHT, SUPERMAN. A PATROL CAR IS TAKING HER HOME.
AS FOR THIS FOOL--NOT THAT HE DESERVES IT, BUT--WE HAVE SOME LEFT-OVER THANKSGIVING DINNER AND A WARM BED WAITING FOR HIM.
THAT'S MORE THAN MANY WILL HAVE TONIGHT.
GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN.

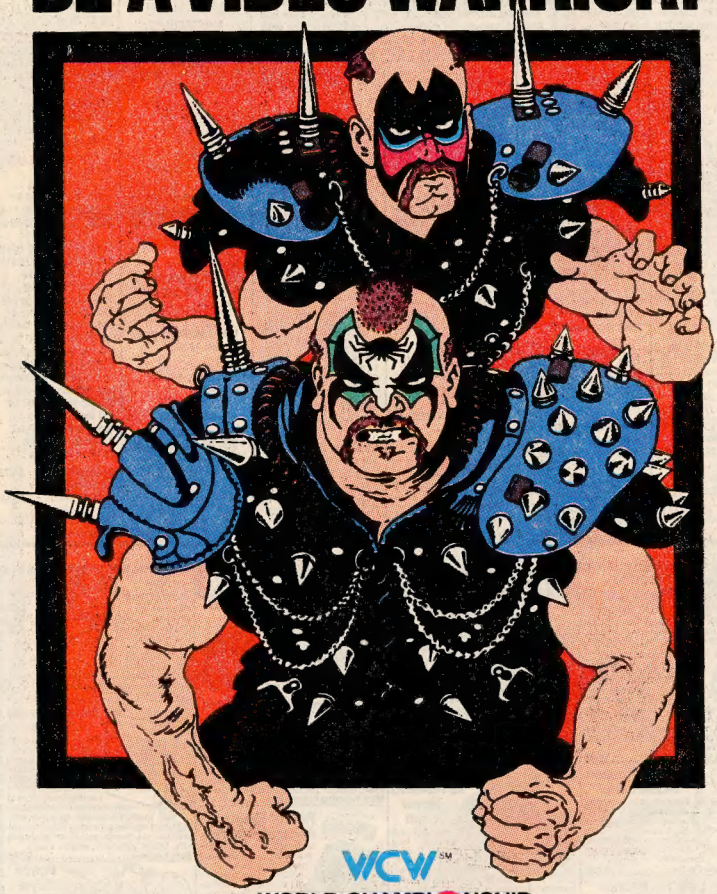

WOTTA GUY--HE EVEN WORKS HOLIDAYS! I MEAN, AT LEAST WE GET OVER-TIME!
YEAH, AND FROM WHAT I HEARD HE SPENT A GOOD BIT OF THE MORNING--


"--OUT AT STRYKER'S ISLAND, STOPPING SOME SORT OF BREAK-IN! CAN YOU IMAGINE? WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO BREAK INTO THAT PLACE?"
THIS IS RICH...


...GILLESPIE SENT THE PURGE ROBOT TO SILENCE ME... KEEP ME FROM TALKING TO THE D.A. ABOUT INTERGANG OPERATIONS... JUST AS I'D HOPED!*
THE LITTLE WEASEL DIDN'T REALIZE HE WAS GIVING ME THE MEANS TO BUST OUT OF HERE!
*ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #466, STILL ON SALE!


I'D ALREADY BE FREE, IF SUPERMAN HADN'T BUTTED IN! HE NEARLY RUINED EVERYTHING. I COULDN'T SEE THE FIGHT...
BUT HE MUST'VE RIPPED PURGE APART! 'SA GOOD THING HE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE MICRO-GUIDANCE SYSTEMS IN PURGE'S EXTREMITIES!
I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW THEY GOT TO ME THROUGH THE DUCTWORK WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING THAT THEY WERE MISSING!
BLASTED THINGS CAME CLOSE TO THROTTLING ME, BEFORE--! UH-OH... GUARD COMING!
'EVENING, MANNHEIM... ENJOY YOUR DINNER?
IT WAS ALL RIGHT.
I NOTICED YOU CLEANED YOUR PLATE. YOU STAY OUTTA TROUBLE--
--AND JUST MAYBE THERE'LL BE "SECONDS" AT CHRISTMASTIME! HA-HA-HAH-HA-HA!
YOU WOULDN'T LAUGH SO HARD IF YOU KNEW THAT PURGE'S ARMS CRACKED THIS DAMPER COLLAR! NOW THAT IT'S NO LONGER SAPPING MY POWER--
--I COULD WRAP THESE BARS AROUND YOUR UGLY NECK... ONLY YOU'RE NOT WORTH THE EFFORT!
THERE WON'T BE ANOTHER GUARD AROUND FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR. THAT'S JUST ENOUGH TIME...
"...TO DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE!"
IT FELT GOOD TO STOP THAT HIJACKER!
TEAM-LUTHOR HAS MAINTAINED SUCH A PRESENCE--HELPING TO RESTORE ORDER IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE BIG BLACKOUT*--I WAS BEGINNING TO WONDER IF METROPOLIS NEEDED ME ANYMORE!
SOME SUPERMAN I'VE BEEN! IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT I WASN'T HERE TO HELP THE CITY THROUGH THE BLACKOUT...
...BUT, I'VE BEEN SO CAUGHT UP IN THINGS--I WASN'T EVEN AROUND TO HELP ONE OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDS! HE MAY BE DESTITUTE...OUT ON THE STREETS...
* AS SEEN LAST ISSUE! HOPE YOU DIDN'T MISS IT!

BE A VIDEO WARRIOR!



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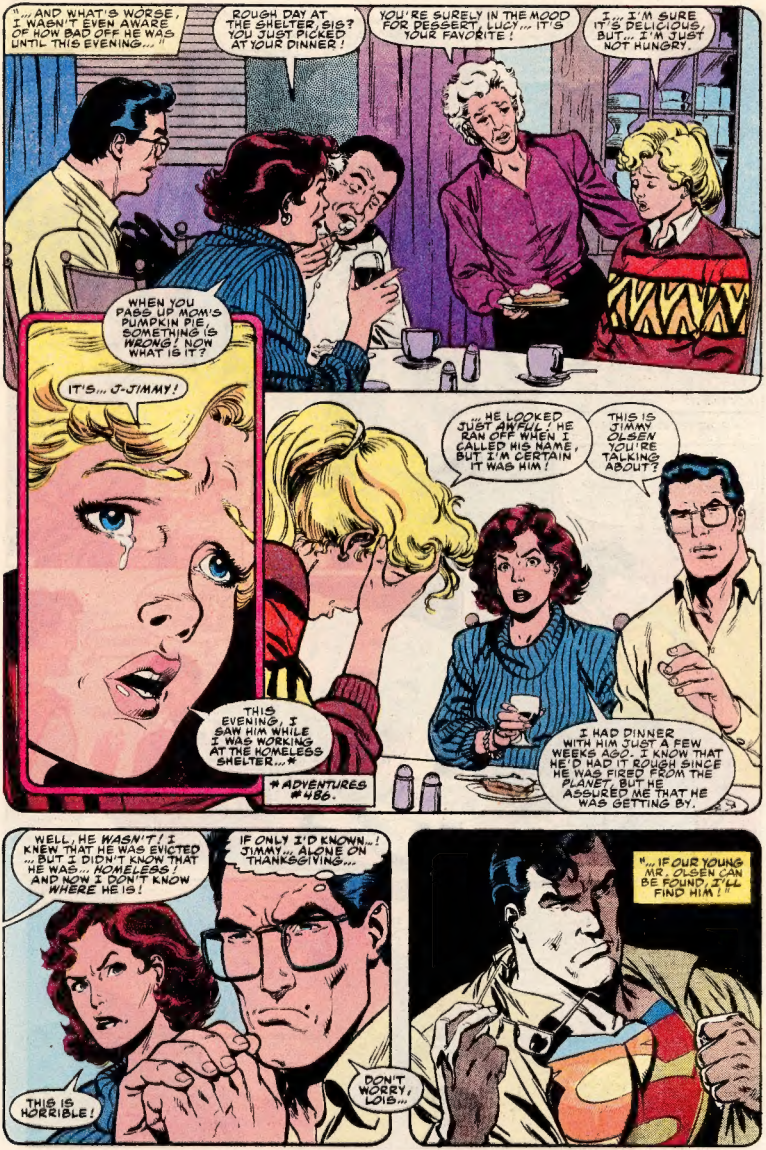
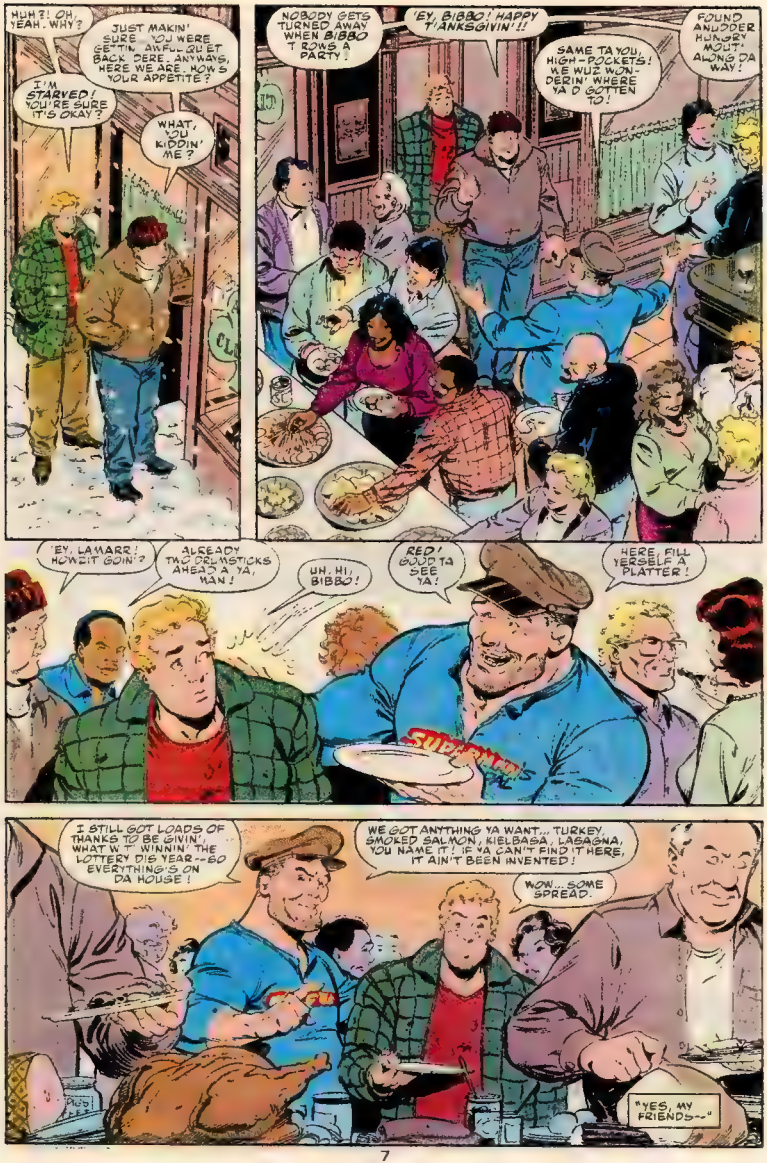

"...AND WHAT'S WORSE, I WASN'T EVEN AWARE OF HOW BAD OFF HE WAS UNTIL THIS EVENING..."
ROUGH DAY AT THE SHELTER, SIS? YOU JUST PICKED AT YOUR DINNER!
YOU'RE SURELY IN THE MOOD FOR DESSERT, LUCY... IT'S YOUR FAVORITE!
I... I'M SURE IT'S DELICIOUS, BUT... I'M JUST NOT HUNGRY.
WHEN YOU PASS UP MOM'S PUMPKIN PIE, SOMETHING IS WRONG! NOW WHAT IS IT?
IT'S... J-JIMMY!
HE LOOKED JUST AWFUL! HE RAN OFF WHEN I CALLED HIS NAME, BUT I'M CERTAIN IT WAS HIM!
THIS IS JIMMY OLSEN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?
THIS EVENING, I SAW HIM WHILE I WAS WORKING AT THE HOMELESS SHELTER...*
I HAD DINNER WITH HIM JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO. I KNOW THAT HE'D HAD IT ROUGH SINCE HE WAS FIRED FROM THE PLANET, BUT HE ASSURED ME THAT HE WAS GETTING BY.
* ADVENTURES #486.
WELL, HE WASN'T! I KNEW THAT HE WAS EVICTED ...BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THAT HE WAS... HOMELESS! AND NOW I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS!
IF ONLY I'D KNOWN...! JIMMY... ALONE ON THANKSGIVING...
THIS IS HORRIBLE!
DON'T WORRY, LOIS...
"... IF OUR YOUNG MR. OLSEN CAN BE FOUND, I'LL FIND HIM!

THIS IS THE FIRST PLACE TO START SEARCHING. I COULD'VE BEEN HERE A LOT SOONER, IF NOT FOR THAT HIJACKER.
PETER SHERMAN HOMELESS SHELTER
FUNNY... IT WAS THROUGH JIMMY'S EFFORTS TO PUBLICIZE THE PLIGHT OF ONE HOMELESS MAN,* THAT THIS SHELTER WAS OPENED.
*IN ADVENTURES #445.
TO THINK THAT JIMMY HIMSELF MIGHT'VE COME HERE...!
THANKS, MRS. RUIZ! YER A REAL LIFESAVER!
HEY, LOOKIT!
GOOD EVENING, ELENA.
WELL, SUPERMAN! DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU MISSED YOUR THANKSGIVING DINNER! WE STILL HAVE SOME LEFT-OVERS ON THE STEAM TABLE--!
THANK YOU, NO. I'M LOOKING FOR A FRIEND WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN HERE EARLIER... A YOUNG FELLOW WITH RED HAIR... ABOUT 5'7". I BROUGHT A PHOTO--!
HMM... HE LOOKS FAMILIAR...
WAIT A MINUTE! HE'S THE ONE WHO SAID HE SAW A ROBOT!
ROBOT?
SNAP!
HOW COULD I FORGET? LATER ON...
"... HE GOT INTO A FIGHT OVER SOME CHEAP CAMERA!"
NEARLY HAD MY HEAD HANDED TO ME BACK THERE...
"... BUT AT LEAST I MANAGED TO HANG ONTO THIS! IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT THE FILM INSIDE IS THE ONLY PROOF THAT I REALLY SAW THAT ROBOT!
YEAH, FOR ALL THE GOOD IT'LL DO ME!
HEY, RED, YOU STILL WIT' ME?


HUH?! OH, YEAH. WHY?
JUST MAKIN' SURE YOU WERE GETTIN AWFUL QUIET BACK DERE. ANYWAYS, HERE WE ARE. HOW'S YOUR APPETITE?
I'M STARVED! YOU'RE SURE IT'S OKAY?
WHAT, YOU KIDDIN' ME?
NOBODY GETS TURNED AWAY WHEN BIBBO T ROWS A PARTY!
'EY, BIBBO! HAPPY T'ANKSGIVIN'!!
SAME TA YOU, HIGH-POCKETS! WE WUZ WON-DERIN' WHERE YA D GOTTEN TO!
FOUND ANUDDER HUNGRY MOUT' ALONG DA WAY!
'EY, LAMARR! HOWZIT GOIN'?
ALREADY TWO DRUMSTICKS AHEAD A YA, MAN!
UH, HI, BIBBO!
RED! GOOD TA SEE YA!
HERE, FILL YERSELF A PLATTER!
I STILL GOT LOADS OF THANKS TO BE GIVIN', WHAT W THE LOTTERY DIS YEAR--SO EVERYTHING'S ON DA HOUSE!
WE GOT ANYTHING YA WANT... TURKEY, SMOKED SALMON, KIELBASA, LASAGNA, YOU NAME IT! IF YA CAN'T FIND IT HERE, IT AIN'T BEEN INVENTED!
WOW... SOME SPREAD.
"YES, MY FRIENDS--"

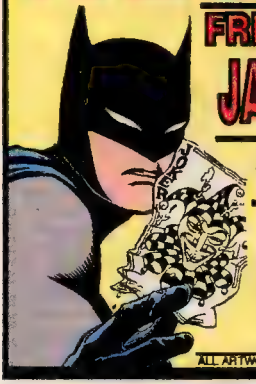
--I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE MOST LAVISH TABLE I'VE EVER SEEN IN MY YOUNG LIFE!
THEN AGAIN, WE DIDN'T HAVE YOUR THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY IN OZ!
OZ?
THAT'S WHAT WE CALL AUSTRALIA, M' DEAR!
HERE'S TO THAT SAINTED LAND... AND TO YOU FINE FOLK WHO ARE GOING TO HELP ME LIFT LEXCORP TO NEW HEIGHTS OF GLORY!
HEAR, HEAR!
AND HERE'S TO LEX LUTHOR THE SECOND, WHOSE PROMOTIONS HAVE GIVEN US ALL REASON TO GIVE THANKS!
INDEED!
FRANKLY, MR. L---
--A LOT OF US WERE UPDATING OUR RESUMES UNTIL YOU TOOK OVER.
SOME OF THE BOARD MEMBERS WERE COOL TO THE IDEA OF NEW BLOOD IN MANAGEMENT... NONE MORE SO THAN GEORGE MARKHAM...
NOT TO WORRY, MIRIAM.
I'VE HAD A LONG CHAT WITH THE DIRECTORS--
"--AND I DOUBT THAT ANY OF THEM WILL GIVE US FURTHER PROBLEMS... PARTICULARLY MR. MARKHAM!"
GOTHAM CITY... OF ALL PLACES TO BE ON THANKSGIVING!
WHY DID HE HAVE TO INSIST ON MY MEETING HIM HERE?

GREAT EASTERN CONVENTIONS

COMIC BOOK CONVENTION SCHEDULE

THE BIGGEST CONVENTION OF THE YEAR!!

NEW YORK!



FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY

JANUARY 10, 11, & 12, 1992

AT THE RAMADA HOTEL
33RD ST & 7TH AVE

IN PERSON!

LARRY STROMAN	MIKE ZECK
MARK BAGLEY	JIM STARLIN
MIKE MIGNOLA	JOE KUBERT
TOM LYLE	MIKE KALUTA

AND HUNDREDS MORE!!!

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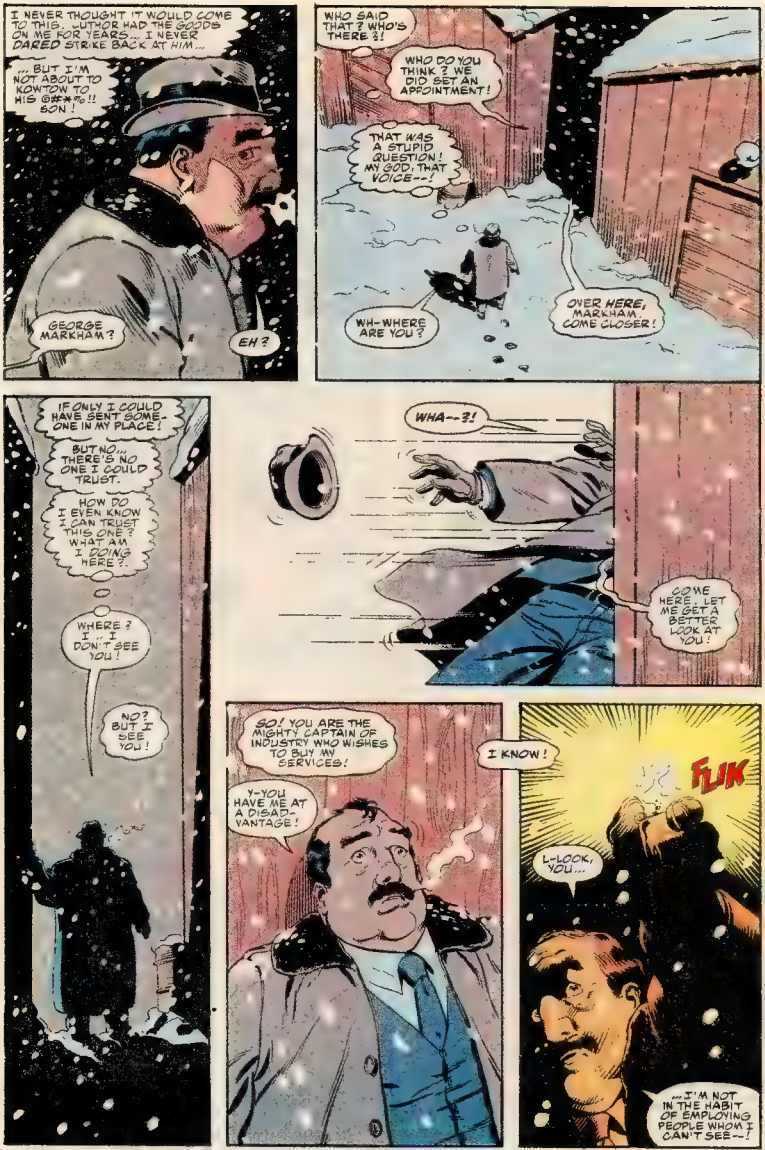
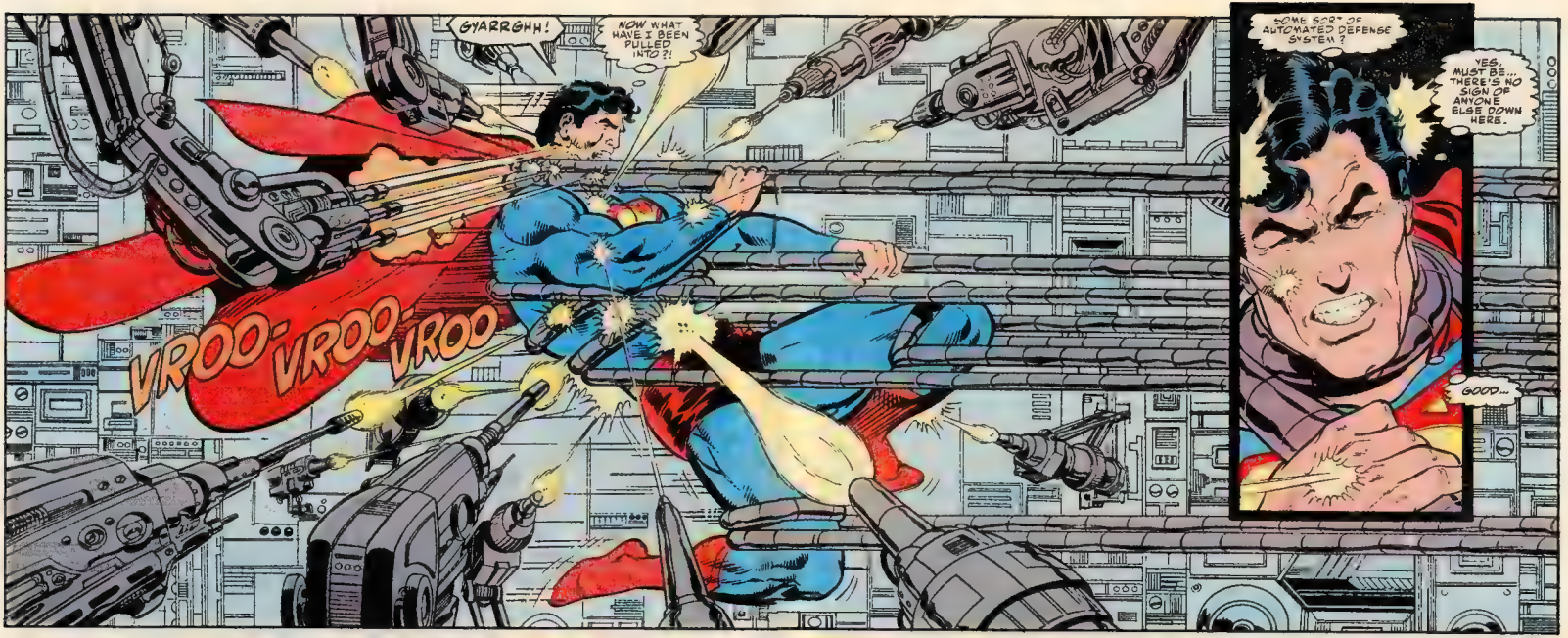
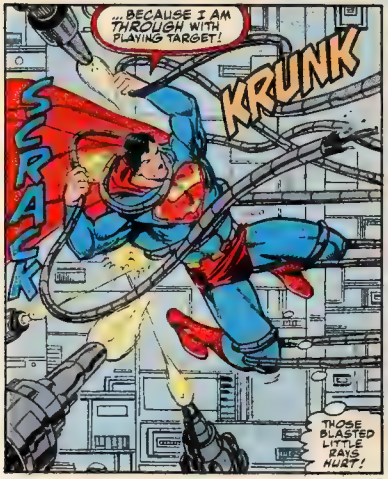
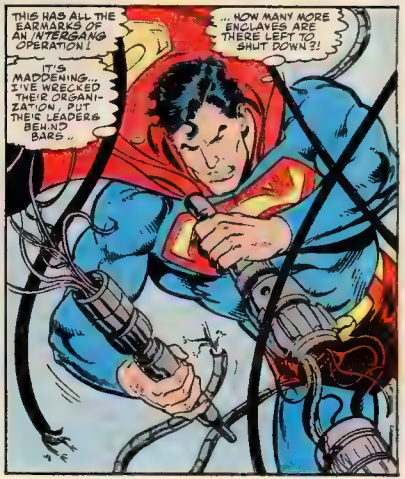

I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD COME TO THIS. LUTHOR HAD THE GOODS ON ME FOR YEARS... I NEVER DARED STRIKE BACK AT HIM...
... BUT I'M NOT ABOUT TO KOWTOW TO HIS @#$%^&!! SON!
GEORGE MARKHAM?
EH?
WHO SAID THAT? WHO'S THERE?!
WHO DO YOU THINK? WE DID SET AN APPOINTMENT!
THAT WAS A STUPID QUESTION! MY GOD, THAT VOICE--!
WH-WHERE ARE YOU?
OVER HERE, MARKHAM. COME CLOSER!
IF ONLY I COULD HAVE SENT SOMEONE IN MY PLACE!
BUT NO... THERE'S NO ONE I COULD TRUST.
HOW DO I EVEN KNOW I CAN TRUST THIS ONE? WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
WHERE? I... I DON'T SEE YOU!
NO? BUT I SEE YOU!
WHA--?!
COME HERE. LET ME GET A BETTER LOOK AT YOU!
SO! YOU ARE THE MIGHTY CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY WHO WISHES TO BUY MY SERVICES!
Y-YOU HAVE ME AT A DISADVANTAGE!
I KNOW!
FLIK
L-LOOK, YOU...
...I'M NOT IN THE HABIT OF EMPLOYING PEOPLE WHOM I CAN'T SEE--!

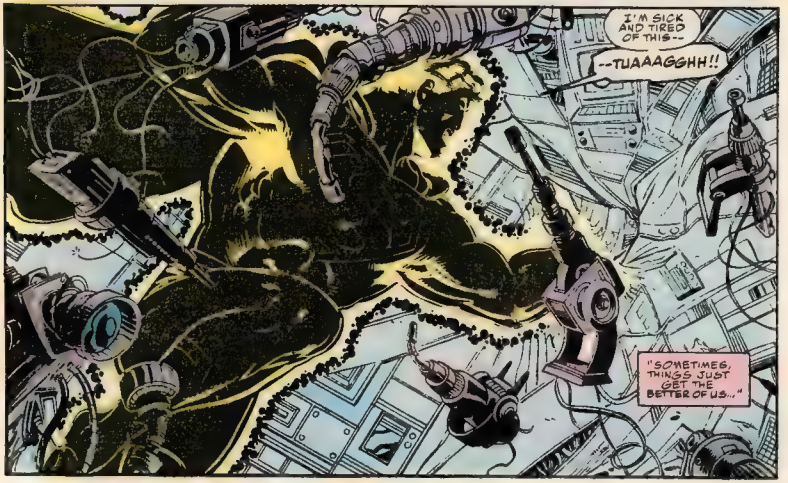
SEEN ENOUGH?
REALLY, MARKAM, WHY DID YOU THINK THAT I CALL MYSELF... HELLGRAMMITE?
GYAHH!
THIS, I TAKE IT, IS THE INFORMATION I ASKED FOR?
Y-YES...
..TH-THAT'S THE ONE WHO'S GIVING ME TROUBLE!
YOUNG LEX LUTHOR!
STANDING IN THE WAY OF YOUR EMPIRE BUILDING, IS HE?
THE PRICE FOR HIS ELIMINATION WILL BE STEEP.
YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE NUMBER OF A CERTAIN SWISS BANK ACCOUNT...
..DEPOSIT FIVE MILLION DOLLARS THEREIN, AND I SHALL GO TO WORK. UPON LUTHOR'S DEATH, YOU SHALL DEPOSIT ANOTHER FIVE MILLION.
A... A TRANSACTION OF THAT SIZE WILL TAKE TIME.
... IF NO MONIES ARE TRANSFERRED WITHIN THIRTY DAYS, I JUST MIGHT PAY YOU A VISIT... A FREE VISIT!
NOW GO!
WHAT HAVE I DONE? I'VE MADE A DEAL WITH A DEVIL!

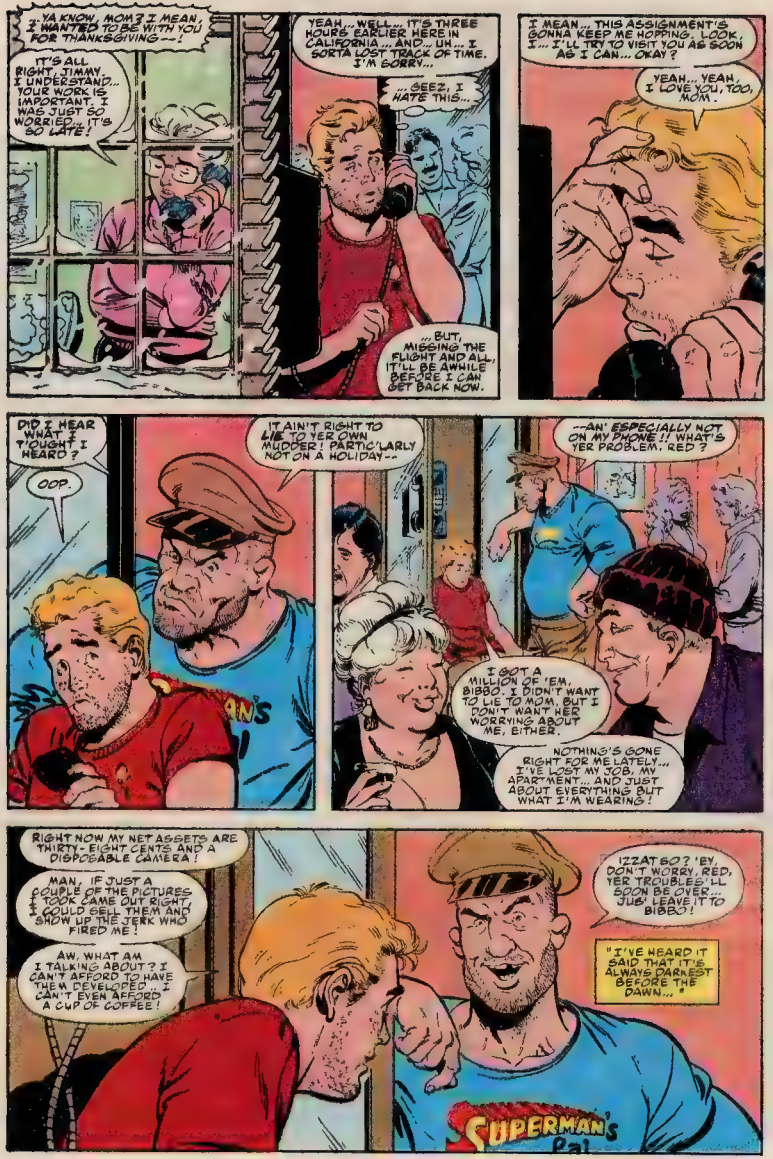
MEANWHILE...
PETER SHOEMAKER HOMELESS SHELTER
OH, COME NOW! IT'S WAY TOO WEIRD TO BE TRUE!
IT MAY SEEM THAT WAY, ELENA--
--BUT IF JIMMY OLSEN SAID THAT HE SAW A ROBOT COME OUT OF YOUR BASEMENT GRATING, I'D GIVE HIS REPORT THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT!
I MYSELF FOUGHT A ROBOT JUST A FEW HOURS AGO!
BUT EVEN I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO THE BASEMENT--IT WAS SEALED OFF BY THE MANAGEMENT COMPANY THAT GAVE US THE BUILDING!
WHY WOULD A ROBOT BE DOWN THERE?
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION!
...WHY IS THE BASEMENT OF THIS BUILDING LINED WITH A LAYER OF LEAD?
TO SHIELD SOMETHING RADIOACTIVE? OR, PERHAPS, TO HAMPER MY X-RAY VISION?
RRENNNKK!
HERE'S ANOTHER...
SUPERMAN!
OMIGOD!
CALL 9-1-1! ASK FOR THE SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT... HURRY!
ELENA, GET BACK!!
TZING
TZING
TZING

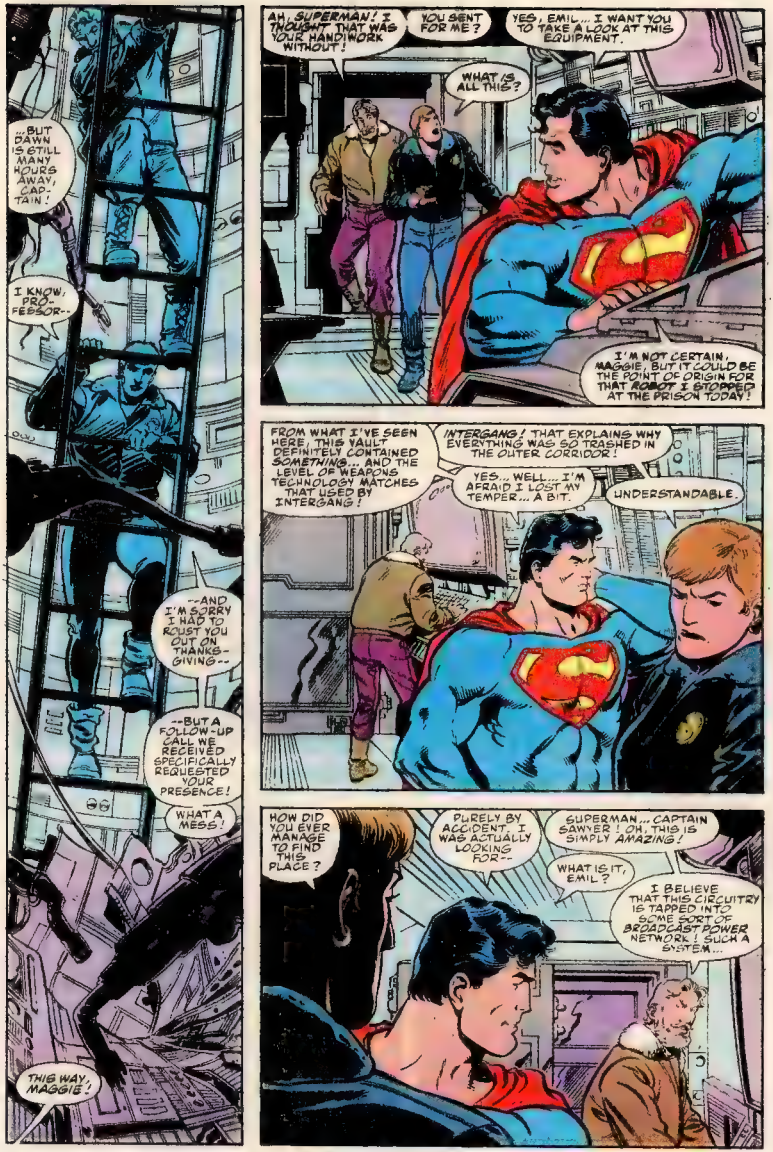

GYARRGHH!
NOW WHAT HAVE I BEEN PULLED INTO?!
VROO-
VROO
VROO
SOME SORT OF AUTOMATED DEFENSE SYSTEM?
YES, MUST BE... THERE'S NO SIGN OF ANYONE ELSE DOWN HERE.
GOOD...

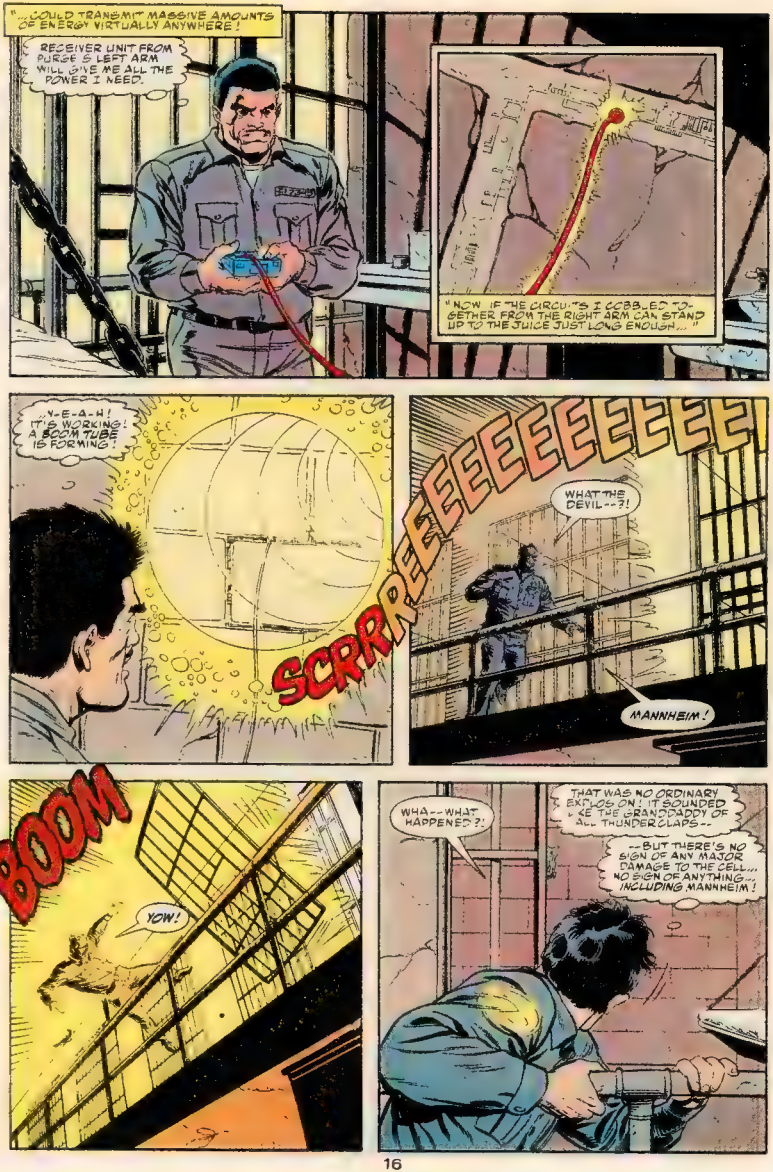

...BECAUSE I AM THROUGH WITH PLAYING TARGET!
KRUNK
SCRACK
THOSE BLASTED LITTLE RAYS HURT!


THIS HAS ALL THE EARMARKS OF AN INTERGANG OPERATION!
IT'S MADDENING... I'VE WRECKED THEIR ORGANIZATION, BUT THEIR LEADERS BEHIND BARS..
...HOW MANY MORE ENCLAVES ARE THERE LEFT TO SHUT DOWN?!


I'M SICK AND TIRED OF THIS--
--TUAAAGGHH!!
"SOMETIMES, THINGS JUST GET THE BETTER OF US..."


..YA KNOW, MOM? I MEAN, I WANTED TO BE WITH YOU FOR THANKSGIVING--!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, JIMMY. I UNDERSTAND... YOUR WORK IS IMPORTANT. I WAS JUST SO WORRIED... IT'S SO LATE!
YEAH... WELL... IT'S THREE HOURS EARLIER HERE IN CALIFORNIA... AND... UH... I SORTA LOST TRACK OF TIME. I'M SORRY...
...SEEZ, I HATE THIS...
...BUT, MISSING THE FLIGHT AND ALL, IT'LL BE AWHILE BEFORE I CAN GET BACK NOW.
I MEAN... THIS ASSIGNMENT'S GONNA KEEP ME HOPPING. LOOK, I... I'LL TRY TO VISIT YOU AS SOON AS I CAN... OKAY?
YEAH... YEAH. I LOVE YOU, TOO, MOM.
DID I HEAR WHAT I T'OUGHT I HEARD?
OOP.
IT AIN'T RIGHT TO LIE TO YER OWN MUDDER! PARTIC'LARLY NOT ON A HOLIDAY--
--AN' ESPECIALLY NOT ON MY PHONE!! WHAT'S YER PROBLEM, RED?
I GOT A MILLION OF 'EM, BIBBO. I DIDN'T WANT TO LIE TO MOM, BUT I DON'T WANT HER WORRYING ABOUT ME, EITHER.
NOTHING'S GONE RIGHT FOR ME LATELY... I'VE LOST MY JOB, MY APARTMENT... AND JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING BUT WHAT I'M WEARING!
RIGHT NOW MY NET ASSETS ARE THIRTY-EIGHT CENTS AND A DISPOSABLE CAMERA!
MAN, IF JUST A COUPLE OF THE PICTURES I TOOK CAME OUT RIGHT, I COULD SELL THEM AND SHOW UP THE JERK WHO FIRED ME!
AW, WHAT AM I TALKING ABOUT? I CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE THEM DEVELOPED! I CAN'T EVEN AFFORD A CUP OF COFFEE!
IZZAT SO? 'BY, DON'T WORRY, RED; YER TROUBLES'LL SOON BE OVER... JUS' LEAVE IT TO BIBBO!
"I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT IT'S ALWAYS DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN..."
SUPERMAN'S Pal


AH, SUPERMAN! I THOUGHT THAT WAS YOUR HANDIWORK WITHOUT!
YOU SENT FOR ME?
YES, EMIL... I WANT YOU TO TAKE A LOOK AT THIS EQUIPMENT.
WHAT IS ALL THIS?
I'M NOT CERTAIN, MAGGIE, BUT IT COULD BE THE POINT OF ORIGIN FOR THAT ROBOT I STOPPED AT THE PRISON TODAY!
FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN HERE, THIS VAULT DEFINITELY CONTAINED SOMETHING... AND THE LEVEL OF WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY MATCHES THAT USED BY INTERGANG!
INTERGANG! THAT EXPLAINS WHY EVERYTHING WAS SO TRASHED IN THE OUTER CORRIDOR!
YES... WELL... I'M AFRAID I LOST MY TEMPER... A BIT.
UNDERSTANDABLE.
HOW DID YOU EVER MANAGE TO FIND THIS PLACE?
PURELY BY ACCIDENT! I WAS ACTUALLY LOOKING FOR--
SUPERMAN... CAPTAIN SAWYER! OH, THIS IS SIMPLY AMAZING!
WHAT IS IT, EMIL?
I BELIEVE THAT THIS CIRCUITRY IS TAPPED INTO SOME SORT OF BROADCAST POWER NETWORK! SUCH A SYSTEM...
...BUT DAWN IS STILL MANY HOURS AWAY, CAP-TAIN!
I KNOW, PRO-FESSOR--
--AND I'M SORRY I HAD TO ROUST YOU OUT ON THANKS-GIVING--
--BUT A FOLLOW-UP CALL WE RECEIVED SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED YOUR PRESENCE!
WHAT A MESS!
THIS WAY, MAGGIE!


"...COULD TRANSMIT MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF ENERGY VIRTUALLY ANYWHERE!
RECEIVER UNIT FROM PURGE'S LEFT ARM WILL GIVE ME ALL THE POWER I NEED.
"NOW IF THE CIRCU"S I CCBB..ED TOGETHER FROM THE RIGHT ARM CAN STAND UP TO THE JUICE JUST LONG ENOUGH..."
"...Y-E-A-H! IT'S WORKING! A BOOM TUBE IS FORMING!"
SCRRREEEEEEEEEE
WHAT THE DEVIL--?!
MANNHEIM!
BOOM
YOW!
WHA--WHAT HAPPENED?!
THAT WAS NO ORDINARY EXPLOSION! IT SOUNDED LIKE THE GRANDADDY OF ALL THUNDERCLAPS--
--BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF ANY MAJOR DAMAGE TO THE CELL... NO SIGN OF ANYTHING... INCLUDING MANNHEIM!

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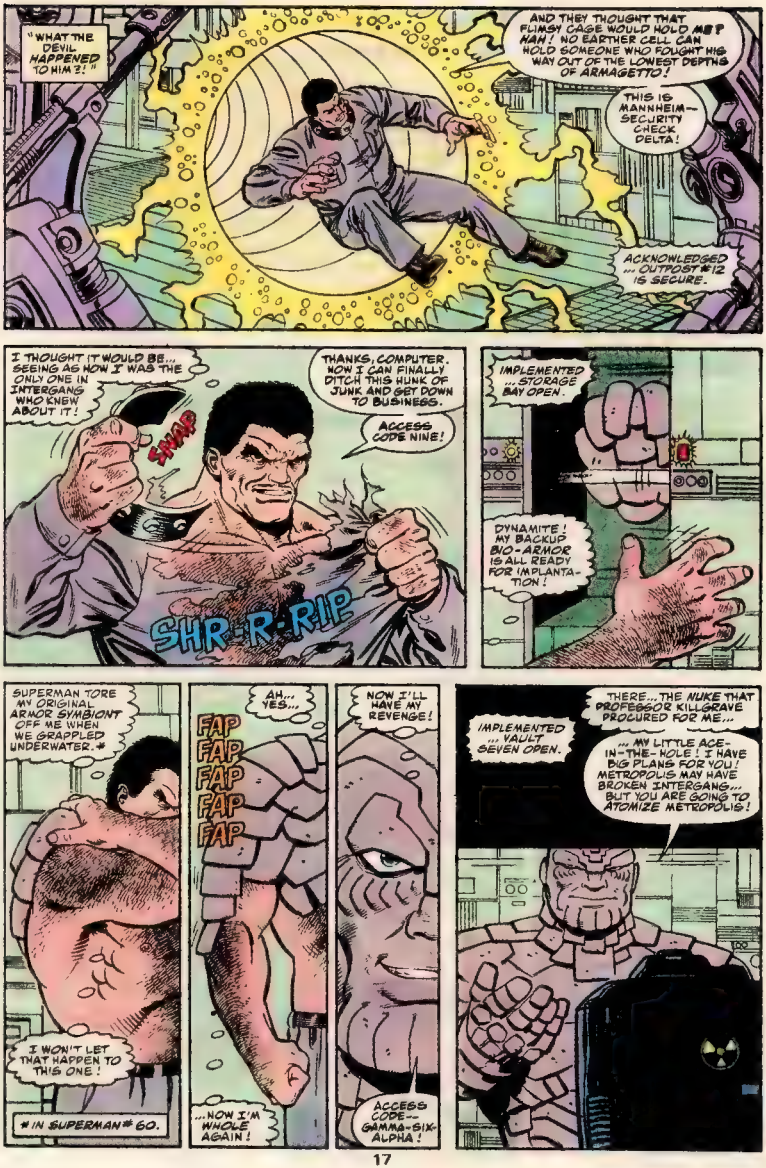
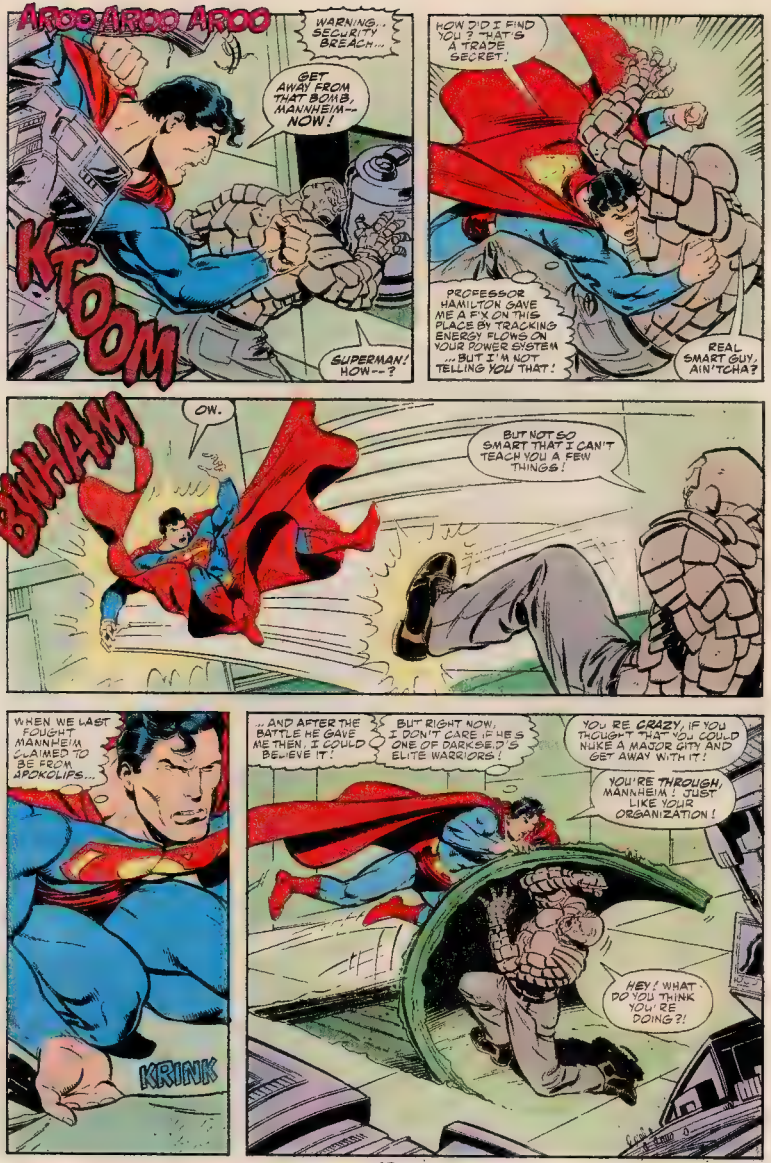
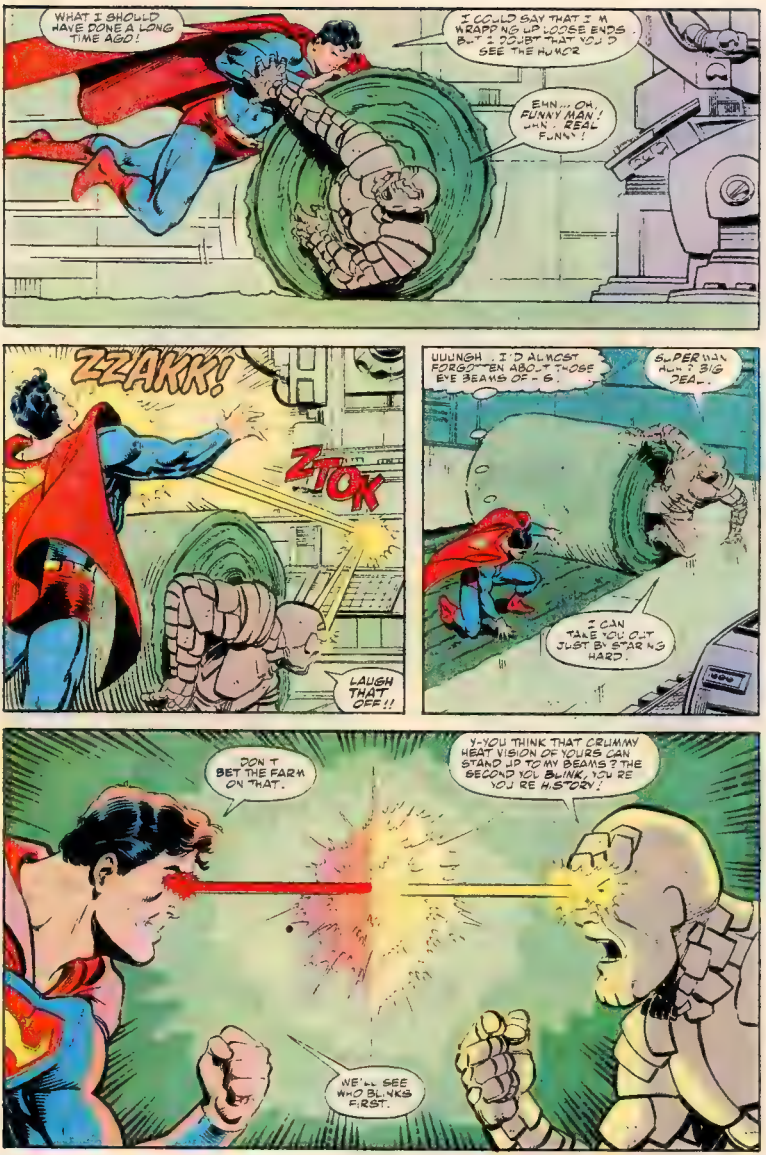

"WHAT THE DEVIL HAPPENED TO HIM?!"
AND THEY THOUGHT THAT FLIMSY CAGE WOULD HOLD ME? HAH! NO EARTHER CELL CAN HOLD SOMEONE WHO FOUGHT HIS WAY OUT OF THE LOWEST DEPTHS OF ARMAGETTO!
THIS IS MANNHEIM—SECURITY CHECK DELTA!
ACKNOWLEDGED ... OUTPOST #12 IS SECURE.
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE... SEEING AS NOW I WAS THE ONLY ONE IN INTERGANG WHO KNEW ABOUT IT!
THANKS, COMPUTER. NOW I CAN FINALLY DITCH THIS HUNK OF JUNK AND GET DOWN TO BUSINESS.
ACCESS CODE NINE!
SNAP
SHR-R-RIP
IMPLEMENTED ... STORAGE BAY OPEN.
DYNAMITE! MY BACKUP BIO-ARMOR IS ALL READY FOR IMPLANTATION!
SUPERMAN TORE MY ORIGINAL ARMOR SYMBIONT OFF ME WHEN WE GRAPPLED UNDERWATER.*
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN TO THIS ONE!
* IN SUPERMAN # 60.
AH... YES...
FAP FAP FAP FAP FAP
...NOW I'M WHOLE AGAIN!
NOW I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE!
ACCESS CODE-- GAMMA-SIX-ALPHA!
IMPLEMENTED ... VAULT SEVEN OPEN.
THERE... THE NUKE THAT PROFESSOR KILLGRAVE PROCURED FOR ME...
... MY LITTLE ACE-IN-THE-HOLE! I HAVE BIG PLANS FOR YOU! METROPOLIS MAY HAVE BROKEN INTERGANG... BUT YOU ARE GOING TO ATOMIZE METROPOLIS!


AROO AROO AROO
WARNING... SECURITY BREACH...
GET AWAY FROM THAT BOMB, MANNHEIM--NOW!
KTOOM
SUPERMAN! HOW--?
HOW DID I FIND YOU? THAT'S A TRADE SECRET.
PROFESSOR HAMILTON GAVE ME A FIX ON THIS PLACE BY TRACKING ENERGY FLOWS ON YOUR POWER SYSTEM ...BUT I'M NOT TELLING YOU THAT!
REAL SMART GUY, AIN'TCHA?
BWHAM
OW.
BUT NOT SO SMART THAT I CAN'T TEACH YOU A FEW THINGS!
WHEN WE LAST FOUGHT MANNHEIM CLAIMED TO BE FROM APOKOLIPS...
KRINK
...AND AFTER THE BATTLE HE GAVE ME THEM. I COULD BELIEVE IT!
BUT RIGHT NOW, I DON'T CARE IF HE'S ONE OF DARKSEID'S ELITE WARRIORS!
YOU'RE CRAZY, IF YOU THOUGHT THAT YOU COULD NUKE A MAJOR CITY AND GET AWAY WITH IT!
YOU'RE THROUGH, MANNHEIM! JUST LIKE YOUR ORGANIZATION!
HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!


WHAT I SHOULD HAVE DONE A LONG TIME AGO!
I COULD SAY THAT I'M WRAPPING UP LOOSE ENDS BUT I DOUBT THAT YOU'D SEE THE HUMOR
EHN... OH, FUNNY MAN! UHN. REAL FUNNY!
ZZAKK!
ZTOK
LAUGH THAT OFF!!
UUUNGH. I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN ABOUT THOSE EYE BEAMS OF - G.
SUPER UHN AUH? BIG DEAL.
I CAN TAKE YOU OUT JUST BY STARING HARD.
DON'T BET THE FARM ON THAT.
Y-YOU THINK THAT CRUMMY HEAT VISION OF YOURS CAN STAND UP TO MY BEAMS? THE SECOND YOU BLINK, YOU'RE YOU'RE HISTORY!
WE'LL SEE WHO BLINKS FIRST.

HE... HE'S GOT ME OUTGUNNED! MY BEAMS ARE ALREADY STARTING TO FADE...
...BUT HIS SEEM AS STRONG AS EVER! I HAVEN'T FELT SUCH HEAT THIS SIDE OF THE GREAT FIRE PITS! HOW LONG CAN HE KEEP THIS UP?!
GIVE UP, MANNHEIM!
NEVER!
COMPUTER... CODE 12... CYCLE AND KEY ON MY COMMAND!
YOU'RE CRACKING UP, MANNHEIM--
--THERE'S NOTHING BEYOND THAT WALL BUT SOLID BEDROCK! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE THAT WAY!
WATCH ME!
NOW!
A BOOM TUBE!
SCREEE
LATER, SUPERMAN!
HE'LL BE THROUGH THAT DIMENSIONAL WARP AND GONE TO WHO-KNOWS-WHERE BEFORE I CAN STOP HIM...
...UNLESS I SHUT THE GATE!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY THAT EASILY! NOT THIS TIME!
CHA-ZTAK
CHAK
NO! YOU CAN'T CUT THE BRIDGING CIRCUIT... NOT NOW! NOT NOWWWW:%

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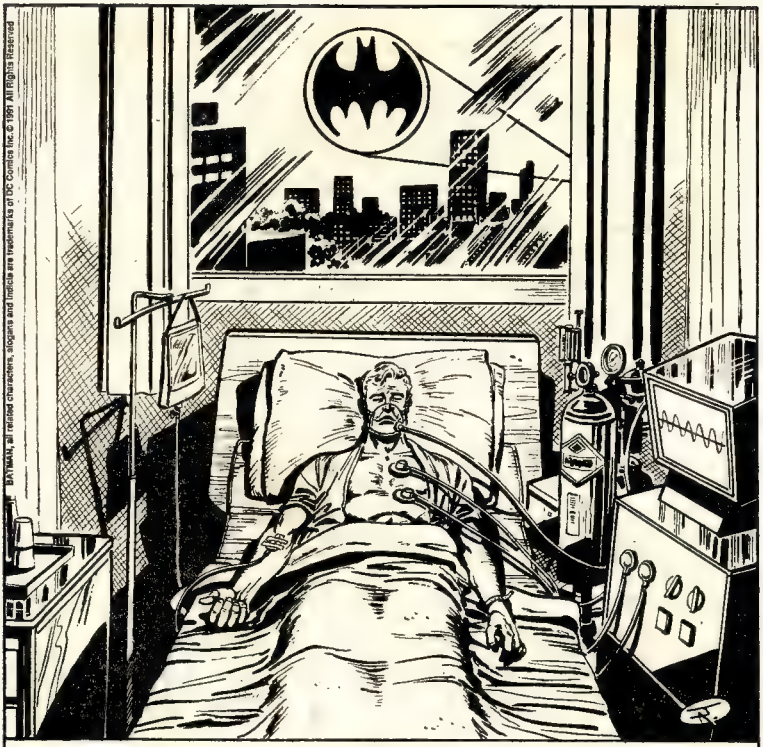

BATMAN'S BEST FRIEND ISN'T ON THE STREETS TONIGHT

People said that Commissioner Gordon had heart. He was a tough cop, and proud of it. Eating right, exercise, vacations—those things were for guys not so tough.

Tobacco was part of it. A smoke would jump-start the day, help him get through a long night, mellow out the bad hours.

Then one day all the pain in the world collected in his chest and squeezed.

Jim Gordon's heart wasn't working right anymore. That made it hard to be tough. And even harder to be proud.

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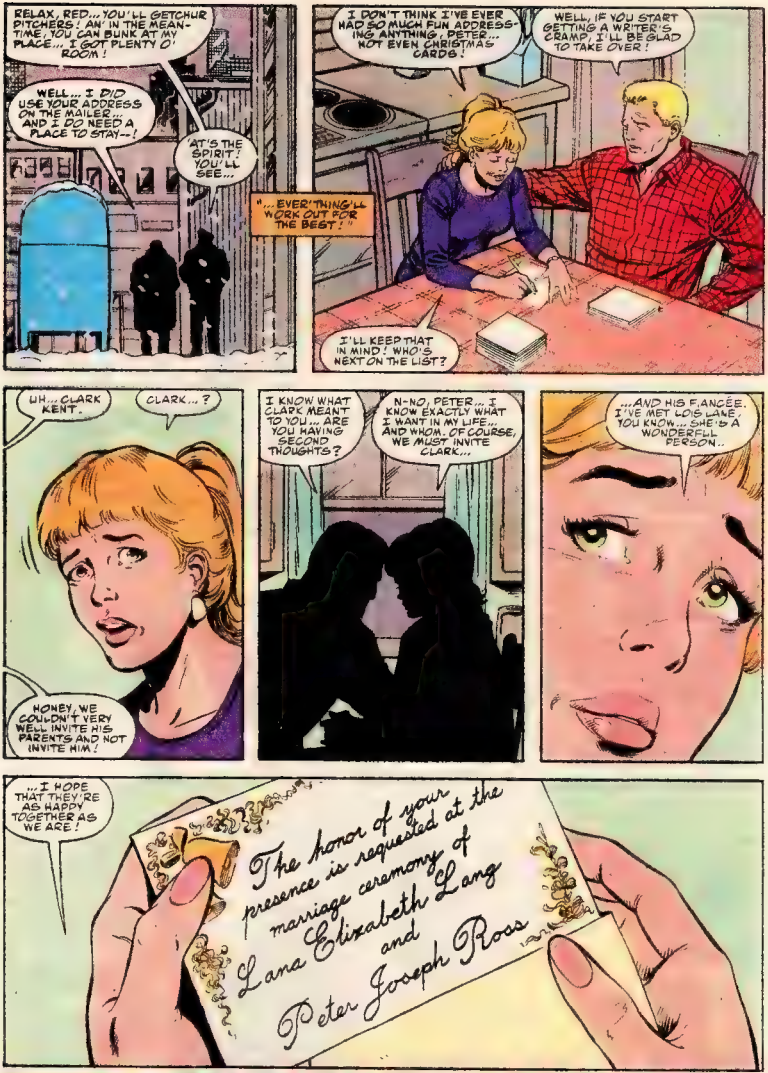
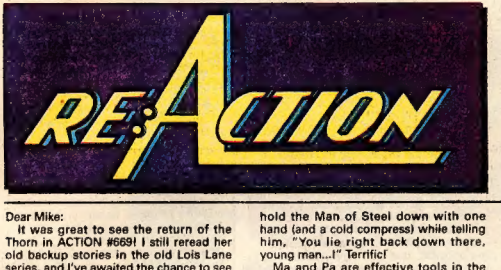
American Heart Association

"I SUPPOSE THAT HORRIBLE SCREAM LASTED LESS THAN A SECOND
"IT ONLY SEEMED AS IT WENT ON FOREVER
"THE BOOM TUBE FADED OUT ALMOST INSTANTLY
"THERE WAS NO SIGN TO INDICATE THAT MANNHEIM HAD EVER BEEN THERE... EXCEPT FOR A SMALL PILE OF ASH.
"THERE WAS THE BOMB, OF COURSE
"IT COULD HAVE DESTROYED METROPOLIS... AND MANNHEIM WOULD HAVE USED IT WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT. I KNOW HE HAS AN ABSOLUTE MANIAC ON THAT SUCKER! BUT EVEN
... I SHOULD NEVER HAVE GIVEN HIM THE CHANCE TO ACTIVATE THAT TUBE!
CLARK, YOU DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL HIM... BUT YOU HAD TO STOP HIM. AND, WELL, WHO KNOWS... MAYBE MANNHEIM SOMEHOW SURVIVED!
MAYBE... BUT IT STILL BOTHERS ME THE WAY I LET MY ANGER AND FRUSTRATION OVER EVERYTHING GET TO ME. I WAS FIGHTING MANNHEIM ON HIS TERMS... I SHOULD'VE FOUND A BETTER WAY--!
OH, HONEY... LOOK AT IT THIS WAY... YOU KEPT HIM FROM USING THAT BOMB AND SAVED 11 MILLION LIVES... THAT SHOULD COUNT FOR SOMETHING!
YES... YOU'RE RIGHT... I JUST WISH IT HAD ENDED DIFFERENTLY
I KNOW... BUT WE CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT WE WANT!
THAT'S FOR SURE...
"... I NEVER DID MANAGE TO FIND JIMMY OLSEN!"
C'MON, RED, I SAID YA COULD PAY ME BACK LATER... WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
OPEN 24 HOURS
DRUGS
OH, NOTHING, BIBBO... BUT I WISH WE COULD'VE FOUND A PLACE THAT DEVELOPED FILM OVERNIGHT.
'EY, WE WUZ LUCKY TO FIND ANY-PLACE OPEN CHRISTMAS EVE, BESIDES DIDN'T THE CLERK SAY THEM DISPOSABLE CAMERAS ARE SPECIAL?
YEAH... THEY HAVE TO BE MAILED TO A LAB FOR PROCESSING. I JUST HOPE THE FILM AND PAPER ISN'T ALL MUSHED BY THE HEAT.
OH WELL, HERE GOES...!


RELAX, RED... YOU'LL GETCHUR PITCHERS! AN' IN THE MEAN-TIME, YOU CAN BUNK AT MY PLACE... I GOT PLENTY O' ROOM!
WELL... I DID USE YOUR ADDRESS ON THE MAILER... AND I DO NEED A PLACE TO STAY--!
AT'S THE SPIRIT! YOU'LL SEE...
"... EVER'THING'LL WORK OUT FOR THE BEST!"
I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER HAD SO MUCH FUN ADDRESSING ANYTHING, PETER... NOT EVEN CHRISTMAS CARDS!
WELL, IF YOU START GETTING A WRITER'S CRAMP, I'LL BE GLAD TO TAKE OVER!
I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND! WHO'S NEXT ON THE LIST?
UH... CLARK KENT.
CLARK...?
HONEY, WE COULDN'T VERY WELL INVITE HIS PARENTS AND NOT INVITE HIM!
I KNOW WHAT CLARK MEANT TO YOU... ARE YOU HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS?
N-NO, PETER... I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I WANT IN MY LIFE... AND WHOM. OF COURSE, WE MUST INVITE CLARK...
...AND HIS FIANCÉE. I'VE MET LOIS LANE. YOU KNOW... SHE'S A WONDERFUL PERSON..
...I HOPE THAT THEY'RE AS HAPPY TOGETHER AS WE ARE!
The honor of your presence is requested at the marriage ceremony of Lana Elizabeth Lang and Peter Joseph Ross
AND THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY IS LIKEWISE REQUESTED NEXT MONTH, WHEN...
THE PAST IS PROLOGUE!



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Dear Mike:

It was great to see the return of the Thorn in ACTION #669! I still reread her old backup stories in the old Lois Lane series, and I've awaited the chance to see her reemerge in the new continuity. (Or do her appearances in BOOSTER GOLD count?) Her new costume is definitely more practical than her old one, but I will miss it, as I can still vividly visualize Dick Giordano's and Don Heck's beautiful earlier depictions of the Thorn.

Her civilian identity, Rose Forrest, is a complex character driven by her dreams and quest for revenge. In a recent SANDMAN letter column, Neil Ahlquist suggested that she could logically become involved in a SANDMAN story, and I second the motion; however, I would like to see Rose and the Thorn find a regular berth *anywhere* in the DC Universe. DC could use a visible non-super-powered heroine, and with Black Canary angst-ing away in GREEN ARROW (although I do hope her miniseries creates loud vocal support) and the Huntress retired, the Thorn is a great third choice. Besides SANDMAN and the SUPERMAN books, the BATMAN books and SUICIDE SQUAD are other practical venues for her.

I only buy the SUPERMAN books occasionally, but I have enjoyed those issues I've read, especially the "Time and Time Again" storyline. I find I'm gradually becoming more and more interested in and intrigued by the underworld of Metropolis and the personal lives of the supporting cast. And I'm discovering that Superman himself, who I previously considered one-dimensional, is now quite a fascinating and interesting character. The books' covers in particular have been striking, and this issue's was no exception. Actually, the entire issue's art was beautiful, and I am fast becoming a fan of Dan Jurgens, Bob McLeod, and Glenn Whitmore, the latter also for his stunning work on THE FLASH.

You're fast getting me hooked on these SUPERMAN series.

Jim Kelly
Valley Stream, NY

The faster the better, Jim, we love the attention! One thing you already have in common with the legions of fans already hooked on the Big Red S is an appreciation for Thorn, so we'll be sure to keep you posted on the possible miniseries when we have more info.

*****

Dear Dan and Mike:

One of the nicest things about the revised Superman legend is seeing Ma and Pa Kent, either at home in Smallville or, as in the latest issue of ACTION COMICS (#669), looking after their son following his latest tilt at evil. "Paper Trail" contained some great moments with Ma and Pa, and Roger Stern writes their dialogue *so* well. Only Martha could hold the Man of Steel down with one hand (and a cold compress) while telling him, "You lie right back down there, young man...!" Terrific!

Ma and Pa are effective tools in the process of humanizing the Last Son of Krypton, and Roger knows how to use them. The meeting of the Kents and the Lanes was very enjoyable and I'm glad the outcome was amicable. The potential barriers to Clark and Lois actually getting married are being torn down one after another, and I am seriously looking forward to the happy event *in the near future*. As someone suggested not long ago, ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #500 would be a good time for the knot to be tied.

I agree with Supes, it *is* time to put an end to intergang. The effectiveness of this group has long been lost, and the use of (frankly) feeble characters like Bubbles and Leilani in this issue supports that view, I think. It was good to see Thorn in action again (and in ACTION, if you follow me), though, and I repeat my plea for more of this vastly underrated character.

Finally, I must just say that Denis Rodier is the inker Bob McLeod has needed for years. Sometimes McLeod's art can be a bit sterile without the *right* inking. Rodier is that inker. The stiffness of the figures is gone and the faces are infinitely more expressive. I'm delighted with the art in ACTION #669, so please, let's have much more of the same.

Dale Coe
Cheshire, England

While we love Denis's inks as much as you do, Dale, we wouldn't call Bob's pencils "sterile" by any means. Bob simply prefers draftsmanship over flashy gimmicks in his art, and perhaps that delicate precision is what you're reacting to. But hey, to each his own. As long as you enjoy the end result, we're delighted, too.

*****

Dear Paper Trailers:

I loved Superman's comment regarding the Thorn in ACTION COMICS #669 that she's even more agile than Batman. That's a high compliment to pay any hero, and especially gratifying when that hero is a woman. We don't see many female vigilantes in DC Comics nowadays (in fact, I could probably count them on one hand), so I was very excited to see the Thorn emerge from retirement. This old-timer remembers her from her early appearances, and I'm hoping that she'll spark enough interest among the new legions of DC Comics fans to warrant her return. She's certainly mysterious enough, and I love the new look! Superman is right; the new two-toned costume is very practical and it looks great. Bob McLeod and Denis Rodier did a wonderful, action-packed job in depicting this fiery lady. No Thorn story is complete without seeing her long, flowing hair whipping in the wind. Thanks, guys! I especially enjoyed the beautiful cover by Dan Jurgens and Bob McLeod—definitely poster material! Here's to seeing this dynamic heroine more often!

As for the stars of this book, seeing this couple's parents meet for the first time was not only an historical event, but even more fun than I'd imagined! Pa and Ma Kent showed a lot of fortitude in being left with Lois's father, but then again, having a super-son has certainly given them a lot of patience and inner strength. Clark and Lois needn't have worried. It was good to see the meeting of the families end happily, so I'm very curious about the upcoming plot in MAN OF STEEL #4 involving Sam Lane. I thought the artwork in this (reasonably) subdued domestic scene was just as well done as the action scenes in the book. Each Kent or Lane had their own distinctive look.

Intergang is proving itself to be an even bigger danger to Metropolis than ever before with Lex Luthor out of the picture. Mannheim's diabolical scheme to take advantage of the unrest in the city's corporations makes him a surprisingly powerful force. Of course, the climax of the issue was the battle in the railyard between Superman, Thorn, Tiny Bubbles, and Leilani. Tiny Bubbles is a great villainess because we haven't seen a pumped-up female in DC Comics since the Duchess over in SUICIDE SQUAD, and Superman hasn't had a formidable female foe since his battle with Blaze, I believe. It would've been fun to see Thorn and Superman exchange opponents for a panel or two, but the clash was thoroughly exciting as it was!

Thanks, everyone, for an entertaining issue! I'm looking forward to the debut of Agent Liberty over in SUPERMAN #60!

Neil Ahlquist
Minneapolis, MN

Hey, none of that foe-swapping around here; we don't go in for that kind of thing!

*****

Dear Dan:

Rose and Thorn: the series (or miniseries, at the very least). Make it soon. I love that green nail varnish.

Rol Hirst
W.Yorks, England

It's unanimous! That's a first!

*****

Dear Mike:

I really do not like the Thorn. Let's not see her again any time soon! Everything else was perfect. The Kents meeting with the Lanes was portrayed very realistically. Nice job!

Marc Johnson
San Diego, CA

Just once—couldn't we please everybody? Just one time!

Dear Editor:

OK, it's worked. I think ARMAGEDDON 2001 has probably netted you guys a new Superman reader. ACTION COMICS ANNUAL #3 (which I only originally bought because it was part of said crossover) I loved so much it sparked an interest in the main SUPERMAN line (and the fact that Guy Gardner, the most obnoxious jerkface in the DC Universe, got what he so royally deserved didn't hurt).

Actually, I've become disillusioned of late with the comics industry as a whole; I am especially disgusted with the popularity of the *Punisher*, a most disgusting right-wing fascist thug if there ever was one. Superman is, in contrast, refreshingly positive. He doesn't live in some fairy-tale world of perfection like he used to, but he hasn't let the negativity of today poison him.

But could he really be elected president? He sounds like a liberal (I could be biased), but even in an imaginary story the Democrats couldn't get anybody, even Superman, elected president. Even if they did nominate him, the Republicans could nominate the Joker and get him elected. Roger Ailes and James Baker would find a way. You know they would.

But if you really want more readers, give us more covers like ACTION COMICS #669! I'd play in the Thorn's flower garden any day!

Fritz Baugh
Indianapolis, IN

*****

Dear Mike and Dan:

Now, that's more like it! ACTION COMICS #669 was exactly why I keep coming back to SUPERMAN comics month after month. This is going to sound really stupid, but I enjoy all the SUPERMAN titles when you focus more on the supporting cast than on the feature character. Since MAN OF STEEL #1, no comic book has featured such a well-defined set of characters. Their depth and reasoning always supply a well-paced circuit of events. Just when I think you've devoted too much time to Superman himself ("Time and Time Again") you always do a mind-blower and return to the real stars of the series such as Lois, Ma and Pa Kent, Jimmy Olsen, etc.

The current focus on Intergang's activities and the strike at The Daily Planet are commendable. The return of Thorn was an added plus. I also like the way you've instilled in Superman the ability to turn opponents' powers and weaponry back against themselves. Superman has become one of the most rationally non-violent heroes in years. His core concern even for a fallen foe is so unlike any other comics character in print today. Call him an overgrown boy scout, but keep it coming.

I've finally completed my back-issue collection of every Superman and related title since Crisis. Roger Stern and Jerry Ordway are the real heroes of this feature, and they have turned me into a comic book store-haunting Supofile. I'll make you a deal: You keep writing stories like ACTION #669 and I'll keep buying them. Sounds easy enough, doesn't it?

Bob Theissen
(address withheld by request)

We'll do our best, Bob, and if it will help matters any, how about a Baldy Award to wave around while you're haunting your comic book store? We hear that in the hands of a true Supofile it can force the owner of said shop to fill his store floor-to-ceiling with SUPERMAN comics! Consider that a challenge!

*****

Dear Mike:

I had a problem with ACTION #669: there wasn't enough of it. With the Kents meeting the Lanes, the return of the Thorn, the Daily Planet strike getting violent, and more, I wish we'd had more pages to develop each further. Instead, what we got was only a completely entertaining overview of a day in the life of Superman.

Rose and the Thorn was an interesting concept, one that never saw itself bloom into its potential. It was good to see she has not been forgotten about, though I'd prefer to have seen more of the schizophrenia she faces. Perhaps with her return to action (pun intended), she'll join the supporting cast. Superman can't watch over all of Metropolis. Or, what about a mini-series? I've heard rumors.

The Kents-Lanes meeting was real, though I was surprised how well they hit it off. Does this mean Ma Kent will be calling Ma Lane (Ma Lane?) for that recipe?

Roger Stern continues to be taken for granted, as he spins an interesting tale month after month. Give this guy a hand (or a Baldy); he deserves it.

In all, ACTION COMICS #669 was what I hope to receive out of a SUPERMAN comic. You can't ask for more. Well, maybe more of the Thorn (leave 'em wanting more, right?).

Mark Lucas
Los Angeles, CA

*****

Dear Dan and Mike:

Let me say a word on behalf of the lowly asterisk. I appreciate your frequent use of them. While they may primarily be a sales device to help dealers move back issues and crossover titles, they do reinforce the strong sense of continuity that you have achieved. The asterisks can guide me through my earlier issues to review formative developments in the current storyline. They can also alert me to issues of titles I do not regularly read that relate, directly or peripherally, to events in the Superman titles. (FLASH #53 in SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL #3, and STARMAN #14 in ACTION COMICS #645 are examples). The debut of Thorn in ACTION COMICS #669, however, left me wondering if an asterisk was in order or if we readers were simply being teased with references to an as yet undeveloped background. The debut of Plastic Man in ACTION COMICS #661 raised an identical question. With the introductions of both Thorn and Plastic Man, we saw Clark musing over encounters with each in his early career as Superman. Especially with Plastic Man I wondered if Clark was referring to events in the Plastic Man mini-series (which, horrors, I did not read), or to an untold tale.

Inquiring minds want to know. Should we be chasing back issues of some obscure title or is the history of those first meetings known only to Clark?

Thanks for delivering that action and adventure week after week.

W.E. McCamy
Woodland, CA

Don't fret, W.E., if we feel you need more info to enjoy a particular storyline, we'll make sure that "lowly asterisk" is in there plugging away. By the way, that asterisk's name is Fred, and he makes more money than any of us!

*—Dan Thorsland**
**Lowly (But Happy!) Assistant Editor*

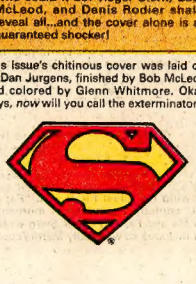
IN ONE WEEK: Cerberus is back, and he's got Lois in his clutches! Can Superman prevent his greatest love from becoming his newest foe? It won't be easy, because Jolt and Blockhouse are spoiling for a fight, and the Man of Steel has to go through them to save Lois! Be here for SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL #8, by Louise Simonson, guest penciller Kieron Dwyer, and Dennis Janke.

IN TWO WEEKS: In SUPERMAN #64, in an annual tradition never before revealed, Superman answers the mail that is sent to him general delivery via the Metropolis post office! Hearts will be mended and wishes fulfilled, so curl up before the fire and let Dan Jurgens and guest artist Jackson Guice fill you with the spirit of the season.

IN THREE WEEKS: Political intrigue and thrilling danger are to be had when Clark Kent discovers the connection between a radical organization and Pete Ross's success in Washington, D.C. Can Clark warn Pete before it's too late, and will Lana Lang be threatened by the danger around her? Don't miss ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #487 by Jerry Ordway, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood, or you'll miss a lot!

IN ONE MONTH: Here we go! It's the action-packed prologue to "Panic in the Sky," our next powerpacked story "arc"! Don't miss this outer-space thriller, when we discover the new ruler of Warworld has it in for Earth in general, and Superman in particular! Who is in command of one of the most devastating forces in the galaxy? Dragga fears him, and even the mighty Maxima follows his commands! And, as if that weren't enough, ACTION COMICS #674 features the return of one of the most asked about Superman characters ever! Who could it be? Roger Stern, Bob McLeod, and Denis Rodier shall reveal all...and the cover alone is a guaranteed shocker!

This issue's chitinous cover was laid out by Dan Jurgens, finished by Bob McLeod, and colored by Glenn Whitmore. Okay, guys, *now* will you call the exterminators?



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